

# MOUNTAIN PLAINS REGIONAL REPORT



# 2002

Food Stamp Nutrition Education

**SPONSORING AGENCIES:**  
United States Department of Agriculture  
Cooperative Extension Services  
Public Health Departments  
State and Local Food Stamp Programs  
State Universities:  
Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri,  
Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota,  
South Dakota, Utah and Wyoming

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**INTRODUCTION**

Goal of the USDA Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program .....4

Implementation .....4

Federal Funding for the Mountain Plains States in the Fiscal Year 2002 .....4

Participant States .....4

**COMMUNITY PARTNERS .....5**

**PROGRAMMING EFFORTS .....6**

**PROGRAM TOPICS .....7**

**ASSESSMENT & EVALUATION**

Outcome Measurements .....8

Indicators of Program Impact .....8-10

**BARRIERS & SUMMARY .....10-11**

**STATE REPORTS**

Colorado .....12-13

Iowa .....14-15

Kansas .....16-17

Missouri .....18-19

Montana .....20-21

Nebraska .....22-23

North Dakota .....24-25

South Dakota .....26-27

Utah .....28-29

Wyoming .....30-31

GOAL OF THE USDA FOOD STAMP NUTRITION EDUCATION PROGRAM

To provide educational programs that increase, within a limited budget, the likelihood of food stamp recipients making healthy food choices consistent with the most recent dietary advice as reflected in the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and the Food Guide Pyramid.

IMPLEMENTATION

State agencies charged with administering the Food Stamp Program for the USDA (e.g., Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services or Department of Health and Human Services) contract with the participating Cooperative Extension Services (CES) and state Public Health Departments to develop and deliver nutrition education programs. In turn, they partner with a wide range of state and local agencies to identify target audiences for nutrition education and to foster collaborative efforts in implementing nutrition programming.

FY 2002 FEDERAL FUNDING FOR THE MOUNTAIN PLAINS STATES

	FSNEP	Networks
Federal funds	\$13,932,737	\$1,586,559
Match	\$14,369,781	\$1,882,089

PARTICIPANT STATES\*

Colorado*	Missouri**	North Dakota	Wyoming
Iowa*	Montana	South Dakota*	
Kansas*	Nebraska	Utah	

\*These states also have Nutrition Networks.  
\*\*University of Missouri at Columbia and Lincoln University.

The strength of the Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program largely lies in its community partnerships with organizations and agencies. They offer a wide range of resources such as referral of eligible participants, team teaching, meeting space, child care, transportation, food demonstration supplies, interpreters, equipment and cash donations for supplementary resources.

Partners include the following:

Adult and Childcare Providers	Hunger Coalitions
After-school Programs	Indian Health Services and Clinics
Alternative High Schools	Learning Centers (ESL)
Area Agencies on Aging	Local Housing Authorities
Boys and Girls Clubs	Local Hispanic Centers
Commodity Food Distribution Organizations	Mental Health Agencies
Community Action Agencies	Parents as Teachers
Correctional Facilities	Parks and Recreation Departments
County Extension Offices	Public Health Departments
Departments of Education	Public Libraries
Departments of Human Services	Public Schools
Diabetes Coalitions	Religious Organizations
Even Start	Salvation Army
Grocery Stores	Senior Centers
Head Start	SHARE
Homeless Shelters	Social Services Agencies

PROGRAMMING EFFORTS

Direct Client Contact (one-on-one; group)	1,338,065
Indirect Client Contact (mailings, displays, PSAs)	4,934,572

COUNTIES SERVED

Urban	46
Rural	411

TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS: 524,427

	Female	Male	Total
Children (3-12)	165,494	164,074	329,568
Teen (13-18)	14,144	11,652	25,796
Adults (19-59)	86,142	39,071	125,213
Older Adults(>60)	30,047	13,803	43,850

ETHNICITY OF PARTICIPANTS:

African American	62,182
Caucasian	525,889
Hispanic	64,528
Native Americans	23,701
Asian/Pacific Islander	4,945

NUMBER OF CLIENTS REACHED BY VARIOUS METHODS:

Direct Contacts	
One-on-one	69,379
Group sessions	1,327,808
Indirect Contacts	
Newsletters	814,463
Displays	550,373
Calendars	36,743
Kiosks	857
Factsheets	521,980
PSAs	2,019,359
Web-based programs	2,794
Newspaper	759,797

Topics include the following:

Breakfast	Healthy Snacking
Breakfast on the Go	Kids in the Kitchen
Calcium	Meal Time/Family Time
Children’s Gardening and Nutrition Activities	Meals for One or Two
Cooking with Children	Media Literacy (for youth curricula pertaining to food nutrition and healthy body image)
Cooking with Herbs and Spices	Nutrition Facts Labels
Dietary Guidelines	Physical Activity
Eating Out	Preparation and Storage of Fruits and Vegetables
Electronic Benefits Displays	Recipe Modification
Eating Out	Smart Shopping
Fiber	Spanish Recipes
Fitness Guide Pyramid	Use of Commodity Foods
Food Guide Pyramid	Water
Food Resource Management	Working with Basic Ingredients
Food Safety	

NEW CURRICULA OR MATERIALS DEVELOPED

Examples:

- Book in a Bag (additional lessons)
- Calendars
- Cent\$ible Nutrition Cost Cutter update
- Eat for Health Took Kit
- Food Guide Pyramid Bingo
- Healthy Choices for a Healthy Body
- Kids a Cookin’ (videos and TV segments)
- Kids in the Kitchen
- Let’s Move and Play (display)
- Let’s Read (additional lessons)
- Month of Menus (based on common foods found in food pantries)
- National Youth Evaluation Tools
- Newsletters
- Nutrition: Good for You
- Walk Kansas (nutrition and physical activity newsletters)
- Working with Basic Ingredients Fact sheet

## OUTCOME MEASUREMENTS

To assess our impact, a regional reporting form and evaluation indicators have been developed. The indicators are based on the White Papers which were written by committees appointed by Food and Nutrition Services to identify needs that should be addressed by the Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program. The five topics are: diet quality, food resource management, food safety, food security, and systems and environmental change. Under each of the broad categories, the Mountain Plains Region evaluation committee developed indicators to assess the program impact.

### DIETARY QUALITY

Number of participants who have indicated that they either have moved closer or plan to move closer to the following:

- 42,557 recommended number of servings from the Food Guide Pyramid.
- 25,809 recommended level of physical activity.
- 34,276 following the recommendations of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

A FNP program assistant worked with a family who was coping with medical consequences stemming from nutritional inadequacies and obesity. Within six weeks, the whole family was eating more nutritiously and beginning to lose weight at a healthy rate. Both the mother and father stopped drinking soft drinks, planned meals two weeks ahead and shopped twice monthly with a list. They reduced their food costs by 50%, making it possible to have enough food to last to the end of the month. They are now eating nutritious, well-balanced meals which has helped reduce medical complications, as well as weight. When asked to evaluate the FNP program, their response was “No one ever told us these things. We are so grateful.” **(IA)**

A FSNEP client commented, “I was not as informed about nutrition as I thought. This class has opened my eyes. I’ve always been a label reader, but now I’m more aware.” **(CO)**

“A parent told me that since I met with her daughter’s junior high health class, her daughter has been choosing to eat meat. She was delighted since her daughter has been anemic.” **(MO)**

### FOOD BUDGETING AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Number of participants indicated they planned to make or have made a positive or planned to make a behavior change in at least one or more of the following:

- 42,138 use a spending plan more often.
- 2,510 utilize a menu plan more often.
- 36,715 shop from a list more often.
- 23,350 comparison shop more often.

“The goal I have set is to use a shopping list when I go to the store. It has helped me stick to what I need. Also, putting the sale price next to the item helped me to compare and decide what item to buy.” **(ND)**

A mother of four trying to make her food dollar stretch has made some significant changes. She has started to use more rice to stretch her meals instead of higher cost ingredients. When making taco meat, she adds less expensive beans to the beef to extend the filling. Finally she has included her children in the food saving efforts by having them help her make homemade bread. **(NE)**

## FOOD SAFETY

Number of participants who indicated that they have made or plan to make positive behavior changes in one or more of the following:

- 23,678 less often let food set out more than two hours.
- 31,088 wash their hands more often before touching food.
- 21,716 keep raw meat separate from other foods more often.
- 26,890 cook meat and eggs thoroughly more often.

A nutrition assistant knew her food safety lesson had made a difference when she attended a social event and she observed people from her classes using plastic gloves when handling food that others would eat; they also put food directly into the refrigerator when the people were finished eating. These were behaviors she had not noticed before in this group. **(MT)**

“I am trying to be more careful about keeping my meat separate from other foods in the refrigerator,” commented a young mother. “We always put our food away right after a meal now that I know bacteria can start to grow.” **(SD)**

The FNP agent overheard students making sure their classmates were washing their hands long enough. Three weeks after the hand washing lesson was taught, the children were still checking to make sure they had washed their hands carefully and their teachers had too! **(KS)**

## FOOD SECURITY

Number of participants who indicated they have enough to eat:

- 376 decreased the frequency of seeking emergency food assistance (e.g., food pantry, soup kitchen, etc).
- 597 increased the use of available non-emergency food assistance programs (e.g., WIC, food stamps, school breakfast, etc).

A client said, “During the series of FNP lessons my husband lost his job. We were able to eat nutritiously using what was already on hand in our house. He has now gotten another job. I think it would have been much more difficult had I not had these classes.” **(WY)**

A former client wanted to take classes again after several years. She said when they moved away, if she hadn’t had the information she learned in class and the basic mix recipes, her family never would have made it because their budget was so tight. She said her husband sure wanted to thank me, said the FNP staff member. **(WY)**

One young mother with one small child, and another on the way, enrolled in FNP because she was on a very tight budget. The FNP staff member discovered that the family had been given food by friends and neighbors for years and the donated food was stored in many places around the house because no one knew how to use it. The family frequently ran out of money before the end of the month because money was spent on eating out almost everyday. With the help of FNP, the young mother made an inventory of food on hand, developed menus, and learned how to use the stored food. They have learned how to make their money last all month. **(UT)**

(continued)

## SYSTEM AND ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE

Number of collaborations:

- 328 with new collaborating partners
- 506 with new collaborations with existing partners

A low-income apartment complex that began as a “drop-off” point for newsletters now hosts “basic cooking skills” classes for residents, following a referral by the local Housing Development Authority and the food pantry personnel. **(SD)**

The Family Nutrition Program has attempted to reach a growing Hispanic population but language has been a barrier. The county Extension council approved funding for a translator. The program assistant befriended a bilingual Hispanic family and recommended that Gladys be hired as a translator. Since she started, 11 families have enrolled in FNP. She has been instrumental in encouraging families to enroll. She has become so successful that she now is translating for FNP and WIC. In this case, the helping relationship is reciprocal. Gladys and her family has benefitted; she also has made it possible for FNP to reach many Hispanic families. **(IA)**

## Barriers

Optimal programming is diminished because of the prevalence of one or more of the following:

- Cultural barriers
- Lack of program awareness
- Lack of childcare and transportation
- Lack of client knowledge of the connection between diet and disease
- Lack of client motivation
- Lack of time/work schedules
- Lack of teacher time/competition for classroom time
- Language barriers
- Learning disabilities
- Literacy skills
- Personnel changes at collaborating agencies
- Pride and self-esteem issues
- Recruitment difficulties
- Transition of clients and/or no telephone
- Work schedule conflicts



## Summary

As we complete the ninth year of the Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program, we see many of our limited resource clients making significant behavioral changes such as:

- choosing and preparing nutritious foods.
- balancing the food they eat with physical activity.
- practicing safe food handling.
- and, skillfully managing their food resources.

Innovative programming and materials are being tailored to the needs of our clientele. Evaluation tools continue to be refined. Finally, collaborations and partnerships play an indispensable role in reaching the food stamp eligible audience.



## COLORADO HIGHLIGHTS

The Colorado NEP is comprised of four components: the Colorado Nutrition Network; Adult FSNEP; Youth FSNEP; and Alternative Strategies.

The Colorado Nutrition Network is a statewide collaborative alliance with the mission to link together public and private organizations to promote and coordinate nutrition education for low-income Coloradans. The Network has two major initiatives: the “Nutrition Links” program and the Food Friends Making New Foods Fun for Kids program.

Adult FSNEP provides classes; demonstrations; and educational activities on nutrition; food choice; food buying; food safety; and food resource management in 21 counties through Colorado State University Cooperative Extension.

The Youth FSNEP Programs are offered statewide in classrooms and after-school settings. The Integrated Nutrition and Physical Activity Program targets fruit/vegetable intake and promotion of physical activity; the Seeds for Health Program and the Growth Project include gardening and seed planting; the Health Kids’ Challenge targets healthy lifestyle choices; and the Denver Museum of Nature and Science offers nutrition lab classes.

Colorado’s major initiative is the La Cocina Saludable Interactive multimedia program. La Cocina Saludable, Spanish for “The Healthy Kitchen,” has six bilingual learning modules: Make It Health; Make It Safe; Make A Change; Make It Fun; Make A Plan; and Make A Great Start. This touch-screen computer program is placed in such sites as food assistance offices, WIC clinics, health clinics, and other locations that are visited frequently by limited resource families.

### Target Audience:

Colorado’s NEP provides nutrition education for low-income individuals and families of all ages from preschool-aged to seniors. Programs utilize various strategies and program delivery modes.

### Objectives:

The overall objective is to help low-income and food stamp eligible populations in Colorado acquire awareness, knowledge, skills, attitudes, practices and behaviors related to nutrition, food and physical activity that lead to healthier lifestyles.

More specifically participants will:

- Make food choices that follow the Dietary Guidelines and the Food Guide Pyramid.
- Increase nutrition and physical activity knowledge.
- Increase fruit and vegetable consumption.
- Reduce fat consumption.
- Improve food safety practices.
- Improve food resource management.

### Partnerships/Collaborations:

Partnership and collaboration are key elements to the success of Colorado’s Food Stamp Nutrition Education Plan (NEP). Collaboration is fostered at the state and local levels. Partnering agencies include the following: Colorado Department of Education, Colorado Department of Human Services; Colorado Head Start Association; Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment; Second Harvest Food Banks; Children’s Hospital Foundation; AMC Cancer Research Center; American Cancer Society; Denver Urban Gardens; Cooperative Extension; WIC; CACFP; Food Stamp Program; Public School Districts, Share Program, Low-income Housing Authorities, Salvation Army, Good Will; local libraries; YWCA; Juvenile Diversion programs; diabetes coalition groups; prison systems; and others at the local level.

### Evaluation of Impact:

Evaluation of program impact is a major consideration. Each program is evaluated to show outcomes and impact. Methods to capture the results of each unique program are varied. Here are some of the highlights:

- For preschoolers in the Food Friends program, 86% of the children tried all four novel foods presented during the evaluation period.
- For Adult FSNEP graduates, 92% report one or more positive changes in their eating habits; 40% more often plan weekly menus; 35% more often store food in a safe manner; and the average saved on food per family was \$82 per month.
- For youth in the Healthy Kids Challenge, 89% were able to correctly identify the elements of the Food Guide Pyramid and 95% were able to accurately choose the healthiest of three meals.
- More than 10,000 modules of interactive multimedia were accessed in a variety of locations.

### Success Stories:

An Alternative Strategies’ kiosk with the La Cocina Saludable software is used in conjunction with the Jefferson County Family Literacy Program. Participants are required to complete several hours learning computer technology. Spanish-speaking participants are encouraged to work through all six-nutrition modules in both Spanish and English. Participants whose primary language is other than Spanish are only encouraged to work through the English version. To reinforce the information learned in the modules, participants receive items with the main messages from La Cocina Saludable, such as measuring spoons; measuring cups; a measuring bowl; Food Pyramid magnet; a tote and a spatula. These items are formally presented to the participants in front of the whole class upon successful completion of all La Cocina Saludable modules. One Hispanic participant said, “I learned how to save money on my groceries. I was spending way too much! Now, I use coupons and make a plan using menus and a food budget.”



## IOWA HIGHLIGHTS

### Target Audience:

The primary audiences in Iowa for the Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program are low-income adults with young children, pregnant teens and low-income youth.

### Objectives:

The behavioral and educational objectives of Iowa are:

- 1) Increase the ability of individuals and families with limited resources to use their food dollars and food stamps wisely to purchase and prepare safe, nourishing foods that will lead to increased nutritional status of family members.
- 2) Increase knowledge of nutrition and the addition of healthy food choices in elementary-aged youth.
- 3) increase understanding of how local food systems and community environments influence the ability of households with limited incomes to feed themselves.

### Partnerships and Collaborations:

Partnerships and collaborations included local churches; school districts and area education agencies; community action groups; local empowerment boards; public health groups, including local hospitals and infant/maternal health clinics; family resource centers; food pantries; Job Corps; Early Access; Transitional Housing; Family Crisis Centers of Northwest Iowa; People Helping People; NEST; Hispanic ministry; Parents as Teachers; Head Start; Caring Connections; YWCA; and Southern Iowa Domestic Abuse Program.

### Evaluation of Impact:

When adult participants entered the program, only 29.7% reported a food pattern of 3-1-1-1-1. This percentage increased to almost 45% by the time participants graduated from the program.

Of the 880 adult and pregnant teens who graduated from the program:

- 78% showed improvement in one or more nutrition practices.
- 69% showed improvement in one or more food resource management practices.
- 63% showed improvement in one or more food safety practices.

Of the youth tested with pre- and post-test items:

- 32 out of 40 (80%) eat a variety of foods.
- 205 out of 601 (32%) increased their knowledge of the essentials of human nutrition.
- 305 out of 833 (37%) improved practices in food preparation and safety.

The Iowa State University Family Nutrition Program Community Food Assessment Project examined the nature and extent of the impact of food deserts on vulnerable populations. In year one (FY02) of this project, focus group findings suggest that

both rural and urban low-income populations shop multiple stores to find affordable foods. Participants identified transportation as the greatest barrier to accessing affordable foods. There are many indications from the focus group discussions that the civic structure of the community does mediate limited food supplies.

## IOWA NUTRITION NETWORK

### Objectives:

- 1). Convey consistent, research-based, nutrition messages to food stamp-eligible individuals and families in Iowa.
- 2). Strengthen the abilities of community nutrition coalitions to increase healthful nutrition and physical activity practices among targeted, low-income audiences.
- 3). Create a network of public and private partners that support nutrition education.

### Community-level strategies:

The network, located in the Iowa Department of Public Health, collaborates with nutrition coalitions to conduct nutrition education programs at the community level.

### State-level strategies:

The network participated in the newly formed Iowa Food Policy Council's Food Security Taskforce. State agencies identified gaps in hunger and food assistance for low-income Iowans. The taskforce plans to develop strategies to close those gaps in 2003.

The network's social marketing campaign, Pick a better snack™, was revised and enhanced in 2002. The campaign promotes fruits and vegetables as snacks. The new materials include:

- three 30-second radio public service announcements, including one in Spanish.
- fifty-two Spanish recipes in weekly newspapers/newsletters for Latino populations.
- fifty-two newspaper/newsletter articles on fruits and vegetables of the month.
- Pick a better snack™ & Act monthly BINGO cards translated into Spanish that included tips for buying, preparation, storage, and snack ideas for fruits and vegetables. Over 900,000 impressions were made with the campaign messages using posters, bookmarks, signage, billboards, newsletters, calendars, radio and newspapers. Team Nutrition, Extension, and WIC programs contribute to and use the campaign.

### Impact:

A new partnership for Iowa involved congregate meal sites and area agencies on aging. The Iowa Nutrition Network collaborated with 50 congregate meal sites to reach low-income seniors with important nutrition messages. Nutrition managers were trained to use Take Charge of Your Health: The Active Older Adult Speaker's Kit, developed by the Georgia Nutrition Network. As a result of the training, nutrition education was provided to over 23,000 low-income seniors at meal sites.

A local network project enhanced the curriculum by partnering with a local food bank. The food bank provided food items, generally fresh produce, to nutrition education participants. Nutrition information and recipes were designed around the donated foods. Having the food available increased program participation and facilitated achievement of the program's goals to increase knowledge of local nutrition resources and increase food security.



## KANSAS HIGHLIGHTS

### Target Audience:

The Family Nutrition Program in Kansas targets all age groups. School-aged youth make up the majority of the contacts followed by parents with young children and older adults. The program also is serving a growing number of Hispanics across the state, particularly in the southwest.

### Objectives:

The behavioral objectives for FNP are one or more of the following. Participants will:

- choose and prepare nutritious meals and snacks.
- balance the food they eat with physical activity.
- use safe food handling, preparation and storage practices.
- manage their food resources and use thrifty shopping practices for nutritious meals.

### Partnerships/Collaborations:

The Kansas Family Nutrition Program has collaborative partnerships\* with:

- schools, libraries, and learning centers.
- WIC and Health Departments.
- Senior Centers and Congregate meal sites.
- Department of Social and Rehabilitative Services.
- Head Start, Early Head Start and child care centers.

\*List is not all inclusive

### Evaluation of Impact after participating in FNP:

Outcomes for adults and teens indicate:

#### Dietary Quality

- 58% intend to eat more fruits and vegetables per day.
- 48% intend to eat more servings of grain per day.
- 47% intend to consume more servings of dairy per day.

#### Food Resource Management

- 49% intend to plan meals ahead of time more often.
- 47% intend to shop from a list more often.

#### Food Safety

- 42% intend to wash hands more often before eating.
- 37% intend to wash hands more often be working with food

Outcomes for children grades 3-6

Significantly more children could answer these questions correctly:

- How many vegetables servings do you need to eat each day? (Pre-test 41%; Post-test 70%)
- What important nutrients does the milk group have? (Pre-test 65 %; Post-test 81%)

Outcomes for children grades K-2

Significantly more children could identify:

- the length of time you should wash your hands (Pre-test 68%; Post-test 90%)
- cheese as an animal product (Pre-test 54%; Post-test 84%)

### Success Stories:

#### Diet Quality and Food Resource Management

"As a result of a client learning food budgeting in a FNP class, she began taking snacks from home for her work breaks instead of buying from a vending machine. As an example, she began drinking water instead of soft drinks. After these changes, she reported that not only did she save money but she felt better too!"

#### System and Environmental Change

A FNP staff member reported since she has been working with youth at the local recreation center, the center's staff made the decision to reinforce the healthy ways of eating she was trying to teach. They established a policy that children can no longer buy candy and pop there (even though the center had heretofore made a profit from the sales of these items). They are now providing healthy snacks for the children in their care!

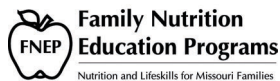
## KANSAS NUTRITION NETWORK (KNN) HIGHLIGHTS

- Food stamp promotional campaigns were conducted using focus groups comprised of families with young children to determine why eligible families are not participating. They were designed to determine the most effective way to get information to eligible families. Three themes emerged: lack of information about easier eligibility requirements; don't know how to apply; and the perceived "rudeness" of food stamp staff.

Because focus group participants indicated WIC displays as the best way to get information to them, three displays were developed each targeting one of the three themes. Displays were placed at WIC; food pantries; Head Start centers; and other social service agencies throughout the state. **The first display won the Kansas Public Health Association Award for Best Written Material, September 2002.** Survey results indicated that the best way to get information about food stamps was through mailings. Small flyers or bookmarks were developed and several schools with high percentages of low income children will be mailing those flyers to all the families enrolled at those schools. Preliminary data indicate an increase in participation in food stamps throughout Kansas.

- Nutrition: Good for You! Curriculum for Those Who Care About Children has been revised. A new lesson on physical activity was added. An evaluation of this lesson was conducted and **a paper has been published in the Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior (Roths et al/GEM NO. 356 J Nutr Educ Behav. 2002;34:343-344). The accompanying video won Best Audiovisual Material from the Kansas Public Health Association, September 2002.**

- KNN's mission is to work through partner agencies to provide nutrition and physical activity education, and to improve access to nutrition resources and nutrition and physical activity education. KNN has adapted a chart from the JNE Supplement 1, 2001 to measure depths of partnerships. An evaluation of KNN conducted by Best Start indicated overwhelming positive experiences reported by partner agencies.



## MISSOURI HIGHLIGHTS

Educational/network activities through University Outreach and Extension (University of Missouri and Lincoln University), and the Department of Health and Senior Services.

### Target Audience:

Food stamp recipients of all ages including youth and the adults who support them, and seniors with young children in the home

### Objectives:

#### Food Security

To insure that individuals and families have enough to eat with less reliance on emergency food assistance.

#### Food Safety

To improve households' safe handling, preparation, and storage of food.

#### Food Resource Management

To enhance practices related to thrifty shopping for and preparation of nutritious foods.

#### Dietary Guidelines

To motivate consumers to adopt eating and lifestyle behaviors that are consistent with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and the Food Guide Pyramid.

#### System and Environmental Change

To bring change to the system or environment that makes healthy food and lifestyle choices more available to food stamp participants.

### Partnerships and Collaborations:

Partnerships and collaboration are key to successful programming across Missouri. Partnering agencies for educational and network activities include WIC clinics, local community agencies, prisons, housing authority, health departments, Head Start, Senior Centers, Department of Education and schools, day care centers, grocery stores, libraries, Parents as Teachers, University Outreach and Extension, Department of Social Services—Food Stamp Division, Department of Mental Health, Department of Agriculture, Bootheel Heart Health Coalition, Bootheel Healthy Start, and St. Louis Senior Centers.

### Evaluation of impact:

Method of impact evaluation varied so as to capture results of the unique programs offered within the Missouri Nutrition Network and University Outreach and Extension (University of Missouri and Lincoln University) Family Nutrition Programs. Here are some highlights:

#### Adult Participants

When asked about their dietary changes during the past year, Missouri Nutrition Network program participants revealed the following:

- 65% eat more fruits and vegetables.
- 58% eat more bread, pasta and/or cereal.
- 49% reduced the amount of fat or cholesterol.

Missouri Nutrition Network supermarket festival participants reported the following:

- 64% stated the nutrition information was helpful.
- 69% stated they would buy different foods as a result of the nutrition information.
  - Of those 69%
    - 40% would buy more fruit.
    - 18% would buy more whole grains and cereals.
    - 12% would buy more vegetables.
    - 65% would prepare foods differently, such as baking or broiling instead of frying.

Lincoln University's adult participants provided these quotes and examples of changes after receiving FNP:

- A client plans to read labels, buys low fat snacks and feels better about her family's snacking.
- A diabetic participant is broiling meats more often than frying; also eating more vegetables.
- A client reports eating more fruits in place of cakes and pies, and reports more energy since the switch.
- Two participants formed a healthy cooking group that meets twice a month. They plan a healthful meal, cook it, and share the recipes with others.
- "I have learned to let pork alone, such as chitterlings, pig ears...have learned to cook with turkey; ground turkey; pink salmon; seasonings; and vegetables...drink plenty of spring water."
- "I was in hospital with high blood pressure of 170. Since my lessons, exercises and less intake of salt, my blood pressure is 130/70."
- "... the program is wonderful...reminding us what we should do as far as nutrition. It has helped me to not use salt and sugar as much as I did in the past."
- Stopped using high fat meats to cook with greens...switched to using smoked turkey breast... enjoys it very much.

### Teens/Youth

In the University of Missouri Family Nutrition Program, a subset of 282 teens reported their changes since attending classes:

- 57% reported changes they made to keep food safer.
- 79% reported changes they made to eat healthier meals and snacks.
- 66% reported changes they made to be more physically active.

Teachers whose classes received the University of Missouri Family Nutrition Program reported these changes:

- 793 teachers reported an average of 62%\* of students were more aware of nutrition.
- 564 teachers reported an average of 53%\* of students made healthier nutrition choices.
- 338 teachers reported an average of 62%\* of students were more willing to try new foods.
- 169 teachers reported an average of 71%\* of students had improved hand washing.

\*Estimated percents based on average of percents provided (not provided for all groups), with classrooms treated as equal in size.



## MONTANA HIGHLIGHTS

### Target Audience:

The Montana Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program serves limited resource individuals of all ages who are receiving or are eligible to receive food stamps. Programming is delivered in 30 of the state's 56 counties, including four Reservations.

### Objectives:

Adult participants in FSNEP can expect to learn how to:

- use the Food Guide Pyramid and Dietary Guidelines to make healthful food choices.
- use food shopping strategies to cut costs and stretch food stamps/food resources.
- use planning skills to make food from food stamps last for the month.
- use safe and sanitary food preparation techniques.
- use safe food storage techniques.

### Partnerships & Collaborations:

Primary program collaborators are the field offices of Public Assistance (Montana DPHHS) and Montana State University Extension field offices. We continue to engage partnerships with food banks; WIC offices; Senior Meal Sites; The Commodity Senior Food Program; Head Start programs; Area Councils on Aging; and Human Resource Development Council districts.

At the state level, Montana FSNEP collaborates with Montana Team Nutrition and the Eat Right Montana coalition, particularly with educational materials and in schools in communities served.

### Evaluation of Impact:

Method of impact evaluation varied to reflect multiple or individual lessons. We also incorporated a "Call to Action" during each class to encourage participants to act on a behavior change they would be willing to try. Nutrition assistants made 19,208 direct contacts through series and single lessons and 27,431 indirect contacts through the distribution of newsletters.

- 64% of participants in our series program showed improvement in food resource management practices such as planning meals, comparing prices, and using a shopping list.
- 70% showed improvement in nutrition practices such as feeding breakfast to their children, making healthy food choices, and paying more attention to food labels.
- 47% showed improvement in food safety practices such as thawing and storing foods properly.
- Of the 1,594 evaluations collected from single lessons, 84% of respondents rated the program "very helpful."

### Success Stories:

Nutrition assistants have documented hundreds of comments throughout the year, but this letter to a nutrition assistant from a staff member of the Office of Public Assistance succinctly expresses the enthusiasm, knowledge, and desired behavior changes we aspire for our participants.

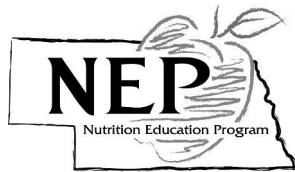
"I want to thank you for the educational help you provided to one of my two-parent WoRC cases. They attended two of your presentations earlier this year.

This couple has six children and was anxious to learn to stretch their food dollars/stamps. The week after attending your classes they met with me for their weekly appointment and were bursting with pride. They said they discussed what they learned; studied the food store ads; designed menus; and set out with \$100 and their grocery list to the store.

They showed me the sales receipt and said they were able to purchase their needed items for only \$56 and were amazed at the cost savings. They said that if this is what they could do on their first time out, they couldn't wait to see what they would be able to do in the future.

You certainly provide an excellent training tool for people who utilize the teachings. On behalf of this couple, please accept a belated thank you."

A major emphasis of the program this year was for FSNEP and DPHHS staff to work together to assist food stamp recipients' transition to the Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) system. FSNEP nutrition assistants reported that this project was a great way for them to work closely with DPHHS and local Office of Public Assistance (OPA) staff and show them what happens in the FSNEP classes. All Nutrition Assistants participated in EBT training in their county(ies). The nutrition assistants participated in training food stamp recipients in a variety of ways. Some actually worked with OPA staff on "field days," working one-to-one with food stamp clients assisting them in using and understanding the EBT card. Some presented short lessons in food shopping, then illustrated how to pay with the new EBT cards. Some provided a follow-up lesson for individuals having difficulty using the EBT card. All nutrition assistants recruited participants to take part in a series of lessons to learn more about stretching food dollars. This effort was successful because the food stamp recipients met the nutrition assistants in person and learned more about the program.



## NEBRASKA HIGHLIGHTS

### Target Audience:

The Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program in Nebraska targets limited resource families which include food stamp recipients, especially single parents, minority households, pregnant and parenting teens, at-risk youth and older adults.

### Objectives:

- Food Stamp recipients, especially single parents, older adults and minority households will develop new skills and learn behaviors leading to improved nutritional well being and utilization of food resources.
- Pregnant and parenting teenagers receiving food stamps will increase knowledge of nutrition, improve their nutritional intakes and develop food resource management skills.
- Limited income children ages 3-18 years will increase nutrition knowledge and application of the knowledge.
- Nutrition education and training network (Community Nutrition Partnership Council) will provide educational in-service to support limited resource families.

### Partnerships/Collaborations:

The Nebraska FSNEP program has developed partnerships with local schools, community action agencies, WIC programs, local food pantries, the food bank, local Health and Human Services Systems Food Stamp Program, TANF case workers, housing authority, senior programs, commodity food programs, Head Start and Early Head Start Programs, after school programs and summer feeding programs.

### Evaluation of Impact:

Using a behavior checklist and conducting entry/exit 24 hour recalls on our graduates, the FSNEP program continues to help our families improve their nutrition, food safety and food resource management practices. Of the current 581 graduates of the program (entry versus exit data):

- 70% improved in at least one food resource management area.
- 73% improved in one or more nutrition practices.
- 48% improved in one or more food safety practice.
- 89% improved in their nutrient intake according to their 24 hour recall.

Areas clients improved in, but still were below recommendations were:

- Number of fruit servings. The majority of clients on entry had close to zero servings per day. Even though there was improvement upon exiting consumption was still below the minimum number of 2 servings per day.

- Calcium intake. Over 50% still did not meet their daily requirements even though most improved from their entry 24-hour recall.

### Group Presentation Impact Data:

Using regional indicators the participants from group presentations also demonstrated improvement:

- 1092 participants moved closer to the recommended number of servings of the Food Guide Pyramid.
- 623 participants shopped from a list more often.
- 682 participants comparison shopped more often.
- 915 participants indicated they washed their hands more often before touching food.
- 674 participants indicated they less often let food set out more than two hours.

### Youth Programming:

6,452 youth participated in youth programming.

- Of 1701 youth over 69% demonstrated an increase in knowledge on why nutrition is important to good health.
- Of 1347 youth 66% indicated they are eating a variety of foods.
- Of 1920 youth improved practices in food preparation and safety.
- Of 1066 youth 71% increased their ability to select low-cost nutritious foods.

### Success Stories:

A participant in FSNEP was referred to us by her food stamp case worker. She and her family only had \$50 to spend on food every two weeks. She had been informed that she was no longer eligible for food stamps. She was very concerned as to how her family of three was going to survive. The FSNEP staff member taught her and her husband about meal planning and had them plan for the next two weeks using the food that they had on hand. They made a grocery list of the items they needed to purchase for the next week. She taught them to compare prices using the unit price stickers, something they had never done before. One month later, the client was still planning meals on a weekly basis, grocery shopping with a list and comparing prices. She said that the tips she learned have allowed her family to get by on \$50 for groceries every two weeks.

A Nutrition Educator reported, "This month I was able to visit with a past client who graduated eight months ago. She sat in on the budgeting sessions and explained to the other participants that since I showed her how to budget her food dollars. She saves money every month and had not had to make a trip to the food pantry since! She now uses the sales flyers and plans ahead."



## NORTH DAKOTA HIGHLIGHTS

### Target Audience:

North Dakota's Family Nutrition Program (FNP) serves limited resource individuals of all ages including youth, families with children and seniors. FNP serves customers in all 53 of the state's counties and Indian Reservations.

### Objectives:

The overall objective is to help food stamp recipients acquire knowledge, skills, attitudes and changed behavior needed for maximizing resources to achieve nutritionally sound diets.

Specifically, participants will:

- make food safety changes by focusing on hand washing.
- make food purchasing changes by focusing on food budgeting.
- increase consumption of dairy products.
- be assured access to enough food.

### Partnerships and Collaborations:

Partnership and collaboration are key elements to the success of the ND Family Nutrition Program. The ND Department of Human Services (NDDHS) is an especially strong partner, as evidenced by their monthly electronic transmission of food stamp household mailing labels to the NDSU Extension Service for the FNP News. Additionally, quality control case reviewers from the NDDHS conduct monthly in-home client satisfaction surveys. Several of the survey questions relate to the FNP newsletter. The most recent results include:

- 77% of the respondents recognize they receive the newsletter.
- 84% of those respondents indicate they read the newsletter.
- 53% of the readers indicate they have used the newsletter to change food purchases or preparation.

### Evaluation of Impact:

In the program year 2001-2002, programming goals were focused on one key concept of each FNP core area. Participants were surveyed after their involvement with that programming to determine its impact.

Survey results after FNP programming indicate:

- 74.4% improved consumption from the dairy group.
- 89.5% improved food safety practices through hand washing.
- 69.2% made food purchasing changes through the use of a food budget.
- 89.2% indicated assured access to enough food.

### Success Stories:

#### Dietary Quality

A client reported, "It was great to get all those ideas on making snacks with my children. I really enjoyed learning how to incorporate snacks into a learning activity for them. Instead of feeding them cookies or sweets, I have been following very closely on what food group they might be missing and providing a good item from that food group at snack time. My kids are calling our afternoon snack 'our family project' and they are willing to try new foods!"

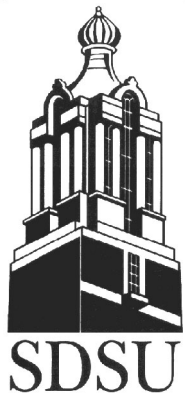
#### System and Environmental Change

Many elderly North Dakotans qualify for a minimal food stamp benefit (\$10) and were in need of additional assistance to meet food needs. To address that need, a FNP staff member wrote to the state's one congressman. He and his staff took action and now our state has the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) operational in many locations throughout the state. As a result, seniors with limited fixed income are eligible to receive food supplies through the CSFP.

#### Program Successes

A monthly newsletter is printed at the state FNP office and distributed to all food stamp households. The North Dakota Department of Human Services electronically transmits the mailing labels each month for this purpose. Counties personalize the back page of the newsletter with relevant local program and contact information. A survey of the food stamp recipients found the monthly newsletter to be the single and most recognizable way of being reached by FNP.

A brief videotape overview of the Family Nutrition Program has been developed and distributed for use at county Social Services offices when food stamp customers receive their initial food stamp benefits and are trained to use the EBT system. FNP staff members often couple the video presentation with additional FNP information; and use the training session as an opportunity to meet individuals in the target audience.



## SOUTH DAKOTA HIGHLIGHTS

### Target Audience:

The South Dakota Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program (FSNEP) is a partnership between the South Dakota State University Cooperative Extension Service, the South Dakota Office of Economic Assistance, and the USDA Food and Nutrition Service. FSNEP is comprised of:

- 1) the Family Nutrition Program (FNP) and
- 2) the South Dakota Nutrition Network.

FNP is available in 11 counties in South Dakota. The program targets families and individuals with limited financial resources, especially seniors, families with young children, and youth. Nutrition assistants continued their FY2002 goal of teaching more teenagers who were either parents, or soon-to-be parents.

### Objectives:

The objective of FSNEP is to help people with limited financial resources achieve a healthier, more adequate diet by learning basic skills in food safety; diet quality; food budgeting; and food security. Educational materials and lessons in FY2002 emphasized increasing the variety of foods in the diet, understanding food portions, and increasing physical activity.

The Nutrition Network through a partnership with Team Nutrition has recognized the need for nutrition education materials in the classroom due to current concerns with obesity; poor food choices; and lack of physical activity among children; youth; and adults. An elementary age, grade-specific curriculum was developed to fit the South Dakota content standards to help teachers incorporate behaviorally based nutrition concepts into everyday classroom instruction. Two additional curricula were also developed, and are currently being piloted tested with middle school and high school aged youth.

The Team Nutrition grant also indicates the need for “changing the school environment,” which to the Nutrition Network means reaching low-income parents and communities. Network partners and allies will continue to distribute Meal Solutions cards that were developed in the previous two years, until another means of communication can be identified and established.

### Partnerships and Collaborations:

FSNEP has many public and private partners which include state agencies, universities, and commodity groups that address food and nutrition issues. Local partners include:

- Department of Social Services
- WIC offices
- Head Start and Healthy Start programs
- Schools, after school programs, alternative high schools, and day care centers
- adjustment training centers and counseling centers
- senior meal sites

- food pantries and other emergency food sites
- low-income housing
- hospitals, clinics, and tribal health organizations.

### Evaluation of Impact:

Of the 94,764 participant contacts made in FY2002, 23% (21,922 contacts) were received directly by group classes and one-on-one instruction; 77% (72,842 contacts) were received indirectly, through visual displays, newsletters, and fact sheets.

Individuals of all ages participated:

- 24% were children.
- 9% were teenagers.
- 38% were adults.
- 29% were seniors.

The majority of participants are female, Caucasian, and not disabled.

Program impact was determined by voluntary, self-reported behavioral change in pre-/post-assessments, written and verbal comments, and by direct observation. The following numbers indicate an estimation of participant improvement:

- 2,902 participants reported improved food safety practices (washing hands; preparing; cooking; and chilling foods properly).
- 2,161 participants reported changing what they ate to improve the quality of their diets (following Food Guide Pyramid, Dietary Guidelines, and physical activity recommendations).
- 721 participants reported improved budgeting practices (following a spending plan and menu plan, shopping from a list).
- 729 participants reported increased food security (use of emergency food assistance when needed, having enough to eat).

### Success Stories:

Another way to measure behavioral change is through the words of participants:

#### Dietary Quality

A young woman at the WIC office said that her son attends the after school program. Since attending classes, he had talked to his mom about eating five fruits and vegetables a day. He has even started asking for spinach, after trying it—and liking it!

In one class of young mothers, the Dietary Guidelines for Americans was used to discuss ways to stay active without expensive exercise equipment. The next month, one mother said, “Since your lesson on increasing exercise, a friend and I have been using the stairs at work instead of the elevator.”



UTAH HIGHLIGHTS

Target Audience:

The target population of the Utah FNP continues to be individuals and families receiving or eligible to receive food stamps. A special project in San Juan county involves Navaho Nation families and youth.

Objectives:

Food budgeting practices of FNP participants will improve as indicated by the following:

- Plan meals in advance, compare prices when shopping, use a list for grocery shopping and budget food dollars to last all month.

Nutrition practices of FNP participants will improve as indicated by:

- Move closer to the number of servings recommended by the Food Guide Pyramid; prepare foods without adding salt; read labels to select food; report that their children ate breakfast more often and move closer to the recommendations of the Dietary Guidelines.

Food safety practices of FNP participants will improve as indicated by:

- Follow the recommended practice of not allowing potentially hazardous foods to sit out for more than two hours.
- Follow the recommended practice of not thawing foods at room temperature.
- Follow the recommended practice of washing hands before touching food.

Partnerships:

Utah FNP continues to partner with organizations and agencies providing services to low-income families. Efforts have been concentrated on working with local Departments of Workforce Services to provide referrals.

Evaluation of Impact:

A total of 1039 families have been enrolled in FNP in 24 Utah counties. Of these, 636 (61%) graduated after an average of 10 lessons, 360 (35%) are continuing with the lessons and 43 (4%) have terminated.

Statistics are for 335 participants who completed both the entry and exit behavior checklist.

- The **Diet Quality** initiative include improvement shown in nutrition practices related to the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and the Food Guide Pyramid.
  - 58% (166 participants) moved closer to the number of servings recommended in the Food Guide Pyramid.
  - 43% (123 participants) moved closer to the Dietary Guidelines.

- The **Food Budgeting** initiative include improvements shown in menu planning, shopping from a list, and comparison shopping.
  - 62% (194 participants) utilize a menu plan more often.
  - 50% (157 participants) shop from a list more often.
  - 47% (146 participants) comparison shop more often.
- The **Food Safety** initiative included improvement shown in thawing and storing foods properly.
  - 56% (186 participants) indicated they less often let food set out more than 2 hours and 21% (69 participants) always follow the recommended practice.
  - 56% (186 participants) indicated they less often thaw frozen food on the counter and 33% (109 participants) always follow the recommended practice.
- The **Food Security** initiative include improvement in having enough food.
  - 53% (165 participants) indicated that they had enough to eat more often.

A youth project in Duchesne county reports the following impacts with sixth graders. As a result of participating in youth FNP:

	Never	Sometimes	Always	No response
After going to the restroom, how often do you wash your hands?	0	40 47	45 53%	0 0
After playing with a pet, how often do you wash your hands?	7 8%	47 55%	37 44%	0
Before eating, how often do you wash your hands?	2 2%	50 59%	33 39%	0
How often do you wash your hands with soap?	0	21 25%	64 75%	0
How often do you eat at least 3 servings from the vegetable group every day?	4 5%	71 84%	10 12%	0
How often do you use the "Nutrition Facts" on the food label to make food choices?	16 19%	59 69%	10 12%	0
How often do you eat something within 2 hours of waking up?	3 4%	38 48%	44 52%	0
How often does your family run out of food before the end of the month?	35 41%	43 51%	7 8%	0

Success Story:

A FNP staff member noticed while working with a group of seniors that one was "extremely" thin. The client began tasting foods that were demonstrated each week. Her husband reported that often the food from the FNP demonstration was all that she would eat for the entire day. Because she regularly attended FNP lessons and started participating in the discussions with others, she has started eating three meals a day and commented that she "really does feel better."



## WYOMING HIGHLIGHTS

### Target Audience:

The Wyoming Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program, known as the Cent\$ible Nutrition Program provides education to all Wyoming residents who are receiving or eligible to receive food stamps. Waivers have been written to include WIC clients, Senior Centers and Title I schools.

### Objectives:

Wyoming Cent\$ible Nutrition Program will be a recognized leader for program management; employee training; program assessment; and curriculum that lead to food security for program participants.

Wyoming CNP will be a recognized partner in community collaboration which brings about system and environmental changes leading to food security for food stamp eligible participants.

Food stamp and food stamp eligible recipients will achieve food security.

### Partnerships and Collaborations:

Partnerships with other agencies serving the limited-resource audience are very important to the success of our program. We have close partnerships with the Department of Family Services, WIC; public health; senior centers; emergency food providers; and Title I schools. Many other agencies provide referrals, space for classes, newsletters and displays.

### Evaluation of Impact

Educating the limited-resource audience is done in many ways. Educational displays (2338) and newsletters (96,520 ) were placed at locations where the limited-resource audience frequent. Kiosks with the La Cocina Saludable program for Spanish speaking clients were used by 543 people in four counties. The Marty Moose and WIN Kids curriculum have just begun in the Title I schools already reaching 1,490 youth and an educational TV series is being aired on Wyoming Public Television.

Our more traditional teaching methods include presentations at cooperating agencies where clients are considered one-time contacts, and enrollment of participants in the CNP program where they complete a series of lessons to graduate from the program. One time presentations may include a lesson with a display or demonstration. Nutrition educators presented 960 one-time presentations to over 14,817 clients. Evaluating one-time contacts is done with a post-lesson evaluation that determines number of clients with intended behavior change. A random sample of the state shows, 78% intended to make a positive behavior change after our lessons. Over 82,064 educational fact sheets and handouts were given out to clients. Every year participants enrolled in the Cost Cutter lessons show

substantial change in behavior in all areas and this year was no exception. Participants—1,482 in all—made behavior changes in the following areas: Food Resource Management Practices, Nutrition Practices and Food Safety Practices.

### Nutrition Practices

89% of homemakers showed improvement in one or more nutrition practices. 92% of graduates showed a positive change in any food group at exit.

### Food Resource Management Practices

83% of homemakers showed improvement in one or more practices.

### Food Safety Practices

61% of homemakers showed improvement in one or more of the food safety practices.

Preliminary impact indicators for our new Grazin' Up the Pyramid with Marty Moose Curriculum show:

- 64% of students now eat a variety of foods.
- 52% of students increased knowledge of the essentials of human nutrition.
- 50% of students increased their ability to select low-cost, nutritious foods.
- 54% of students improved practices in food preparation and food safety.

### Success Stories:

"The Cent\$ible Nutrition Cookbook and program have made a huge difference in my life. Grocery shopping using the program guidelines and helpful hints have allowed me to purchase foods that are rich in vitamins and other minerals that I need in my diet.

I have made substitutions allowing for diabetes Type II and related heart problems. I now have solid control on diabetes and have not had an angina problem since the pressure came off thanks to the program. I menu plan and now am using portion control, am losing weight-slowly and steady and have not gained back a pound. My blood pressure has been behaving beautifully and the program has been a God send."

This course of study was court ordered in order for me to get my kids back. I only took it for that reason, but am I glad I did. Not only am I eating better but I am saving \$50 a month on food and will soon have my kids home."

A client loved the classes. She told the NE they were a great stepping-stone to helping her get out on her own. She felt the success and completing the classes helped her try new things. She is now working and supporting herself and her two children. She is confident they are all getting enough food and enough variety.

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This material was funded by USDA's Food Stamp Program through a contract awarded by the Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services.

The Food Stamp Program provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. To find out more, contact your local SRS office or call 1-800-221-5689.